New System to Track Medication in UAE

The new pharmaceutical track and trace system is being adopted by the Dubai Health Authority (DHA), a first of its kind in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Focussing on quality and patient safety, it will monitor medication delivery throughout the full supply chain, from manufacturing (either in the UAE or elsewhere) to the point drugs reach the patient.

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The authority has already started negotiations with major manufacturing and supplying pharmaceutical companies regarding the implementation of the system. It is stressed that the track and trace system is aimed at combatting counterfeit medication and enhancing accuracy and credibility when dealing with relevant insurance claims. It would also allow better management of medication inventory in the region.

Director General of the DHA, His Excellency Humaid Al Qutami, underscored the importance given to the development of pharmaceutical services. He pointed out that smart technologies and systems' adoption for better management and control of medicine distribution would ultimately improve the wellbeing of patients.

The new system will be rolled out at the DHA's facilities by mid-2020, and used in addition to the barcoding system which DHA adopted in 2017 (again, first in the UAE's healthcare system).

On top of the barcoding system, through which each medicine is given a barcode to avoid mistakes when dispensing medication, DHA has launched several smart pharmacies for dispensing and prescribing medication through the system. The implementation of smart pharmacies allowed to reduce processing time from 22.5 minutes in 2016 to 7.9 minutes in 2018 and increase the outpatient satisfaction rate from 69% to 94% respectively.

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According to Dr Ali Al Sayed, the Director of the Pharmaceutical Services Department at the DHA, the authority intends to further increase the usage of the latest systems and technologies with the aim of ensuring the patients' safety and wellbeing.

The UAE government is also considering a set of new measures to better regulate the pharmaceutical industry. As was reported by *The National* in March, legislation placing substantial fines and imprisonment for those caught selling counterfeit medicine was under review.

Source: Zawya

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